1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

Some were left free to look after land, and even those who were posted on guard duties were posted near their fields.

Jamma tenure conferred a double prestige on the holder in addition to the undoubted economic advantage. It signified that the holder had his roots in Coorg, and the duty of rendering military service to the state in times of emergency conferred on him the second type of prestige. The other important tenure in Coorg was *sāgu*, in which not only was land assessed at ten rupees per hundred *bhaṭṭis* of land, being twice the rate for *jamma* land, but also the holder was liable to render every type of service to the state except military service. During Richter's time, but for forty Coorgs, all the people holding land on *sāgu* tenure were non-Coorgs.[1]

The Rājas occasionally granted land on *jamma* tenure to non-Coorgs as a special mark of favour. Occasionally, Coorgs who held land on *jamma* tenure were transferred to the *sāgu* class as punishment for wrongs done by them.

VI

During the two centuries of rule by the Rājas, Coorg underwent a number of changes, political, administrative, and social. The authority of the local chieftains or Nāyakas was destroyed and the administration was centralized. The Rājas established a postal service (*anché*) for the use of officials only. Land was surveyed thoroughly, and the type of tenure under which each farm was held was recorded in the *Hukum Nāma* of Linga Rāja II (1811–20). The *Hukum Nāma* also contained a few paragraphs dealing with the powers of officials to try cases, civil and criminal, without reference to the Rāja. Serious offences like adultery, murder, and treason were tried by the Rāja himself. The recognition of the authority of the headman of a village and his council of elders was a general feature of the administrative system of the Rājas. They also recognized the authority of caste elders to try and settle caste disputes.

The long and bitter struggle with Haider and Tippu increased the sense of national identity of the inhabitants of Coorg. Coorgs played an important part in this struggle as they formed the bulk of the Rājas' soldiery, and also because they were specially selected for barbarous treatment by Tippu Sultan.

[1] Op. cit., p. 406.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

a joint family speaking Koḍagi while another speaks Kannaḍa. Until recently Coorgs living south of Mercara had a prejudice against marrying those living in the north. The latter were regarded as inferior and derisively referred to as those living 'beyond the hills' (*boṭṭat mēlé*), the implication being that Coorgs south of Mercara were the best Coorgs.

Coorgs formed a compact unit in relation to other castes. They possessed wealth and power, they liked dancing, competitive games involving the exercise of skill and strength, hunting, and soldiering. In the Vēdic or classical caste system these virtues are attributed to Kshatriyas, the caste of warriors and kings, who are next only to the Brahmin in the hierarchy. The resemblances between Coorgs and the Vēdic Kshatriyas are striking indeed in the matter of values, and it is understandable that Coorgs should regard themselves as Kshatriyas. But the classical Kshatriyas, as one of the three 'twice-born' castes, were entitled to perform certain rituals at which sacred verses (*mantras*) from the Vēdas were recited by the priests. Coorgs do not perform any of these rituals and Vēdic *mantras* are not recited when a Coorg is given a name, or marries, or dies.

Coorgs, like other Caste Hindus, object very strongly to the eating of beef, and the strength of their objection was early recognized by the British who banned all slaughter of cattle for the table in Coorg in 1835. But the Coorg dietary includes pork and liquor, and this is occasionally singled out for comment by the other castes. The correlation between status and dietary is particularly strong in the interior of south India, and the Coorg claim to be considered as Kshatriyas comes up against this fact. Coorgs rightly point out that the Rajputs of north India eat pork and that this has not prevented them from being generally regarded as Kshatriyas. However, Rajputs eat only the wild pig and not the domesticated one.

In the Sanskritic myth (*Kāvēri Purāṇa* or *Kāvēri Māhātmya*) about the River Kāvēri, Coorgs are said to be Ugras,[1] or the descendants of the marriage of a Kshatriya prince and his Shūdra wife. The Kāvēri Myth thus cleverly reconciles the economic and

[1] Ugra means 'strong, formidable, terrible, violent, angry, passionate, cruel, fierce, pungent, hot, high and noble. It is also the name of a mixed tribe, descended from a Kshatriya father and Shudra mother, and of Malabar.' M. Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1899, p. 172.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

exterminated by the usurping Rājas of the Ikkēri family, and may in their own eyes have constituted a sort of aristocracy; while Malla Coorgs represented the aggregate main body which was augmented by new accessions from kindred tribes'. He further states that Malla Coorgs include 'those whose descent from Wynāḍ Cheṭṭis or other foreign connexions is traditionally known, for it is no secret among the Coorgs that such additions have been made to their number and the house-names of such bear witness to the fact'.[1]

He also mentions that a poor Coorg was relegated to the inferior group, while a well-to-do Coorg, or one who held a high post in the government, claimed to be a Saṇṇa Coorg.

Cole tells us that Saṇṇa Coorgs greatly outnumbered the Malla Coorgs, that marriages between the two were not frequent, and that the Saṇṇa Coorgs were scattered all over Coorg while Malla Coorgs were more or less confined to north Coorg.[2]

The last point made by Cole seems particularly open to doubt as there seem to have been some Malla Coorgs in the extreme south. Again Saṇṇa Coorgs seem to have been concentrated in Coorg south of Mercara, and it has already been mentioned that the southerners regarded themselves as being superior to the northerners.

The early writers on Coorg refer to a division of Coorgs called 'Boḍḍu Coorgs'. Coorgs south of Mercara seemed to have regarded the Coorgs settled in north Coorg, in Yeḍavanāḍ, Gaḍināḍ, and Surlabhimuttunāḍ as inferior to themselves in intelligence. Hence the appellation '*boḍḍu*', which means 'stupid'. Richter and Cole[3] differ as to who the Boḍḍu Coorgs were, but it seems certain that Boḍḍu Coorgs were small pockets of the Coorg community scattered in areas inhabited mostly by Tuḷu Gauḍas and Kannaḍa Okkaligas. They were influenced by the customs and manners of the latter castes, and occasionally these groups even intermarried. The situation was further complicated by the fact that both Tuḷu Gauḍas and Kannaḍa Okkaligas aspired to pass off for Coorgs.

Boḍḍu Coorgs were then Coorgs who lived at some distance from the main core of their group. Marriages between Boḍḍu

[1] G. Richter, *Castes and Tribes found in Coorg*, Bangalore, 1887, pp. 21–22.
[2] R. A. Cole, *Manual of Coorg Law*, 1861, secs. 3, 5, 6.
[3] Ibid., sec. 3; Richter, *Castes and Tribes found in Coorg*, pp. 21–22.

prevails between the higher castes and Poleyas. For instance, Poleyas may not come out of their huts during the first eighteen days of the biennial festival of the deity Kētrappa at Bēngūr. It is believed that they will suffer some misfortune if they come out and see the festival-priests (*kāvukāras*) going about their sacred work.

Quite the opposite attitude prevails towards Poleyas at the festival of the Bhadrakāḷi of Kunda. The Poleya oracles have many duties at the festival, though they are not permitted to enter the temple of Bhadrakāḷi. They may not touch a high caste person, but they have the right of barring anyone from entering the temple. They stopped me presumably because they considered my dress—I was wearing a suit—improper, and they let me in only after a Coorg friend had explained who I was.

Ritual occasions might either emphasize the structural cleavages that normally exist between high and low castes, or they might tend to minimize them. The former leads, among other things, to the exclusion of the lower castes from ritual, while the latter leads to their inclusion. But inclusion does not mean that structural distance is abolished totally for the duration of the ritual occasion. What happens may be more accurately described by stating that certain individuals belonging to the low castes have ritual roles which place them temporarily in a superior position *vis-à-vis* the high castes.

At an ancestor-propitiation in a Coorg house, a Baṇṇa acts as oracle: he is possessed by each of the ancestor-spirits in turn, and while the possession lasts, he is identified with the particular ancestor possessing him. As the temporary vehicle of the spirit of an ancestor he is entitled to say and do things which he normally would not dream of saying and doing. As ancestor, he might censure the head of the joint family for not attending to his duties properly.

Nowadays young Coorgs who are sceptical about their traditional beliefs tend to see the Baṇṇa oracle at an ancestor-propitiation as an actor playing several roles in a play, and not as the vehicle of the spirits of their ancestors. A young Coorg told me that he had seen a Baṇṇa oracle saluting a big official while he was alleged to be possessed by an ancestor-spirit, and this was proof to him of the fact that all possessions were just make-believe and not real.

Another Coorg youth told me that while he was witnessing an ancestor-propitiation at a friend's house, the Baṇṇa oracle, address-

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

ing him, said '*bā kunyi*' (come, child). My informant, incensed at being called a 'child' by a low-caste Baṇṇa promptly slapped him. The term 'child' is normally used by an elder towards a youth, but only an elder of the same or equivalent or superior caste is entitled to this privilege, and not an elder of a low caste. My informant regarded the oracle as a Baṇṇa, and not as the ancestor of a friend: he had projected the normal structure into the ritual context. Needless to say he did not believe that a Coorg ancestor possessed a Baṇṇa oracle at an ancestor-propitiation.

The Baṇṇa normally occupies a low position in the hierarchy, but the fact that he is the master of the complicated technique of ancestor-propitiation, and that he is possessed by these spirits during the propitiation, temporarily put him in a high position. The contemporary decline of belief in ancestor-spirits, as well as the increasing lack of appeal of the mode of propitiation adopted by the Baṇṇa, have tended to confine him to the position normally occupied by him in the caste structure.

The Brahmin occupies the highest position in the hierarchy and is also the master of a highly complicated ritual technique. But in spite of this there is frequently a certain inconsistency between the positions occupied by him in ritual and secular contexts respectively. In secular affairs power is actually possessed by the man who has wealth and a large following, whatever his caste might be. But even he has to accord the Brahmin the highest place in ritual contexts. The complex relation prevailing between a wealthy and powerful Shūdra Hindu and his poor Brahmin priest comes to mind: the Brahmin is in the Shūdra's pay and protection, but still he has to be respected as a Brahmin and especially in ritual contexts. Where the Brahmin priest is also a scholar or holy man there does not seem to be any inconsistency between his ritual and secular roles.

V

Caste has a tendency to stress horizontal ties. It unites members of the same caste living in different villages and distinguishes them from other castes in the same village. It is extremely unlike the village community in which members of different castes are united by certain common values and are marked off from other villages. The existence of feuds between villages in the past

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

birth', and that she was kept in seclusion 'for a fortnight, or a month, or even two months, according to the wealth and respectability of the family'.[1] Elderly informants deny that she was regarded as unclean, but they do confirm the fact that she was not allowed to see the villagers before a dinner had been given to them.

The bride becomes a member of the groom's *okka* at marriage. The consummation of the marriage in the groom's house on the second night also indicates to her that her future position is that of a mother who contributes children to her husband's *okka*. Marriage in a patrilocal and patrilineal kinship system affects a greater change in the bride's social personality than in the groom's. She is a new person, and this is recognized in her not being allowed to meet the members of her natal village before a dinner has been given them. When there has been a break in the continuity of a relationship, or when a relationship with a new person has to be begun, the best way to do it is with a dinner. Dinner, as we have noted earlier, is an act of solidarity, and the villagers forge their solidarity with the new person, the bride returning to her natal house from the groom's.

XV

All *mangalas* except marriage have either become defunct or so rarely performed that nowadays *mangala* is almost synonymous with marriage. The ritual performed at marriage may be divided into two parts, one part being *mangala*, and the other concerned with the jural aspect of marriage. Only the former part has been analysed in this chapter. By means of this analysis it is hoped to give content to the concept of ritual idiom and to understand the meanings of certain ritual acts which are very common among Coorgs.

Mūrta is the crucial part of *mangala*, and the subject of *mangala* is prepared for *mūrta* by a series of preparatory and purificatory ritual acts such as shaving, bath, and the donning of ritual robes and ornaments. The various occasions on which each one of these preparatory ritual acts is performed have been considered in order to discover their meanings.

Mūrta itself consists of a series of solidarity rites performed on the subject of it by each member of the concerned group. The

[1] *Manual of Coorg*, p. 139.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

process of discovering the meaning of each one of the ritual acts gave us an idea of the ritual idiom of Coorgs.

Solidarity rites are performed on the subject of *mangala,* and each *mangala* marks a change in the subject's social personality. Thus the ear-boring *mangala* marked the attainment of adulthood by a youth. His social personality altered again at marriage as he then acquired new rights and duties.

A man who killed a panther or tiger in a hunt was entitled to *mangala* being performed. A man who had built a new house performed *mané* or house *mangala,* at which *mūrta* was performed to him.

Polé kaṇḍa mangala was performed to a girl some time after she had attained puberty. This corresponded to a boy's ear-boring *mangala.* Marriage is another *mangala* occasion for her and, formerly, *mangala* was performed to her in the fifth or seventh month of her first pregnancy. This marked the attainment of the status of a mother by her. Motherhood is a valued status, and a woman who gave birth to ten children, all of whom were alive, was the subject of a *mangala* ceremony known as *paitāṇḍek aḷapa.*

A child is ritually given a name on the eleventh day of birth, but this does not constitute a *mangala* as the child does not count socially till either the ear-boring or puberty *mangala* has been performed.

Mangala is confined to auspicious occasions, and this is the reason why the ritual disposal of a corpse does not assume the form of a *mangala.*

Mangala carries with it the approval of society. This is brought out clearly in certain cases. For instance, the marriage of a widow does not constitute a *mangala,* while the marriage of a widower does. This is because Coorgs, like Brahmins and other high castes, do not approve of the marriage of a widow. But in the case of Coorgs the disapproval is not sufficiently strong to prohibit altogether the marriage of a widow, as it is among the Brahmins.

When a man killed a panther, *mangala* was performed for him on the village green (*ūr mandu*), whereas it was performed for him on the *nāḍ* green if he killed a tiger. Killing a tiger is worthy of more honour than killing a panther.

When the youthful hero Kaiyandira Appayya killed the great fighter Chōndu and thus restored the prestige of Kaḍiyetnāḍ, the general approval with which Appayya's action was regarded expressed itself in a *mangala* being performed for him.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

to which people without sons go. Widowhood is the result of sins committed in a previous incarnation. Formerly, a widow's head was shaved, and she was not allowed to remarry. A married woman is regarded as an auspicious person, and articles associated with her, like flowers, vermilion, turmeric powder, glass bangles, and the marriage badge (*tāli*), are regarded as sacred and worshipped on certain occasions. A widow is more or less completely excluded from ritual.

It is necessary to note that the Coorg attitude to the widow is similar to the Brahmin's, though the differentiation between married woman and widow is not as thoroughgoing as among the Brahmin. But the similarity does make possible greater Sanskritization subsequently.

A married woman is a preferred type of person among Coorgs. Motherhood is a preferred condition and formerly the mother of ten children was entitled to have *mangala* performed in her honour.

Other types of preferred persons are the strong man who is also skilled in athletic sports, dancing, and fighting, and the magician who is usually also a doctor. Frequently several preferred traits were combined in the same man, making him doubly or trebly preferred. The preference expresses itself in custom and ritual.

It might be said that the general orientation of Coorg culture is martial. Frequently, customs and rites which appear to be taken over from neighbouring cultures are given a martial twist in Coorg. Competitive games like shooting at a coconut, and fighting for the possession of a coconut, and a collective hunt are introduced into every festival.

The harvest festival and the 'festival of arms' are both very significant in this connexion. It has been pointed out that the most important rites of the harvest festival are the cutting of sheaves, the eating of new rice grains, and the expression of a wish for plenty, but around these central rites are organized dancing and singing, competitive games, and a collective hunt. The incidental elements of the festival take up ten or eleven days while the main elements do not take up more than a day.

The completion of transplantation marks the end of a very arduous period in the cultivation of rice. Thereafter both the men and the oxen are relatively free till the beginning of harvesting. The 'festival of arms' comes at the end of the field season, and at this festival a Coorg resumes his contact with his weapons which

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

marriages had been taking place for many years before that time. It is of some significance too that a proverb was quoted illustrating this matter: ñaṇḍwkw maṇḍe ille, koḍavēkw ca:ce illo 'the crab has no head, the Coorg has no regard for kinship terms'. Such a proverb implies a rather long history for the social phenomenon in question. One factor making for disregard of what is obviously felt to be a rule of some validity is worth mentioning. In many cases a strict application of the rule would make it almost impossible for a man to find a suitable wife, even in a community of such a size as the Coorgs, and it must often be extremely convenient and even advantageous to all parties to disregard a brother-sister relationship which is based in no way on blood and may be felt as almost fictitious.

The age at which marriage takes place among the Coorgs is a matter for statistical investigation. It can only be said that girls are not married until after puberty and usually not for a number of years thereafter. The marriage song in main outline and in many of the details is traditionally fixed, needing to be adapted for any wedding only by inserting the appropriate names; it must be of considerable age and where it describes a different state of affairs from those now in vogue may be adduced as evidence of an older stage of the institutions in question, allowing for the possibility that it may be describing an ideal rather than any state that had an actual existence previously. In the song the girl who becomes the wife of the young man whose marriage is described is married five years after puberty. My informants are of the opinion that this represents an ideal, which is rather faithfully lived up to. Certainly marriages before the age of 17 or 18 years for the girl and before the age of 20 for the man are rather rare. It may be noted also that among the more well-to-do Coorgs it sometimes happens that a girl never marries. This may occur for various reasons, perhaps the first of which is that young men of the equivalent social status, for the same reasons that operate in Western society, find marriage economically difficult and tend to marry at a later age than is customary in other groups of the Coorgs. Consequently, a girl may not be asked for when she is in the full bloom of youth and gradually comes to be less desirable in comparison with younger girls. When this happens, a girl of this class may decide that it is better to stay in her own sib and wield there the influence that comes with advancing years and experience rather than snatch at any chance of marriage and enter into an unfamiliar environment where she will occupy for a long time, if not for the rest of her life, a position of secondary importance. If she arrives at such a decision, being a woman of sufficient strength of will to do so, she will undoubtedly be a strong enough character to persuade her family to agree with her. No stigma will attach to her in consequence which cannot be overcome with time and patience.

3:Iyer E-5 (no date) 1948 AW5 Coorg AW5

ful fashioned turban, rather flat and large at top and covering a portion of the back of the neck. They are found in all shades of complexion, and when dressed in a costume they look very grand. The officers and students have now taken to the European style of dress in preference to their own. 291 [177]

The women are more conservative in their dress. It consists of a white or light blue cotton jacket with long sleeves fitting tight and close up to the neck. The skirt is white muslin or blue cotton stuff wrapped several times round and tied at the waist by a string. One end is brought over the bosom and knotted on the right shoulder. To give usefulness to the skirt, the other end is arranged into folds, which, contrary to the fashion of Hindu women, are gathered behind. The head is covered with a white muslin and coloured kerchief, one end of which encircles the forehead, and the four corners are joined together at the back, allowing the ends to fall over the shoulders.

Ornaments

The richness of the ornaments worn by a woman is the criterion to judge the status of a Coorg family. Glass, silver or gold bracelets are worn round their wrists. Their necks are adorned with chains of coral, pearls, or gold from which are suspended old Portuguese coins. They have ornaments for the nose and the rims of the ears. They wear gold rings or rings set with precious stones, and silver ones are worn on the toes. These are similar to those of Hindu women,. The bridal dress adds to all this finery a many-coloured shawl which covers the body, and in the absence of a kerchief, golden hair ornaments, *ch uri gubbi* are worn. Coorg women are skilful in embroidery work, with which they adorn their white kerchief and the seams and corners of the men's white cotton dress. They use red marking cotton and their patterns are very complicated and elegant, and are equally visible on both sides of the dress. 301 [554] [531]

Martial Spirit

The Coorgs have earned a high reputation for their martial prowess. In the words of Lt. Connor, they may be said to be armed from their childhood and the martial spirit is inculcated from the beginning of a man's life. War and agriculture seem their twin natural pursuits, and no harm arises from this happy combination of soldier and husbandman. They show no trace of the savage disposition which often characterises the martial class. They resemble the Nayars in some respects. Both are devoted to arms. Both are characterised by a gallant spirit of generosity and delicate sentiments of honour. The feelings which attach the highlander to the mountains and that fondness for their country which distinguishes subjects of small States are observed among the Coorgs. 181

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

courtiers joined in the mirth and the whole quadrangle rang with mixed shouts of the soldiers, the growl of the bear and the roar of the tiger. Of all the parties in this singular concert, the tiger appeared to be the most discomposed. His eye flashed fire, his tail waved from flank to flank in the most ominous style. I thought at one time, this was to turn out no laughing matter; for, if the angry animal, when at length he lost all patience, had taken a direction towards us, he might have demolished the dynasty of Wadeer, or at least made a vacancy for an officer in his Britannic Majesty's Navy. Fortunately he chose exactly the opposite course, and running furiously across the court, made a flying leap right into one of the low windows of what the Rajah called his English drawing room. The glass and framework of the window were of course dashed to pieces in a moment and the pianos, pictures and book cases must have soon shared the same fate, had not the tiger's progress been checked by the weight of the wretched bear, which hung outside, half way between the window sill and the ground, somewhat after the fashion of the golden fleece over a mercer's door. The tiger we could no longer see, but we could hear him smashing the furniture at a great rate. He was afterwards secured and sent to the rear."

136 * 231 541

After a successful hunt for a tiger, the natives form a procession and carry the carcass with the band of tomtoms to the mandu or village green. The heroes of the day are the man who shot the beast and he who first touched its tail, a feat which used to be rewarded by the Rajah with the present of a silver bangle. The carcass is then raised on a wooden frame, and according to time-honored Coorg fashion, the lucky sportsman is to be wedded to the departed soul of the tiger and may thenceforth wear the honorable gala-mishi or grand mustachio in Rajah's fashion. In May last such a ceremony took place in Mercara on the occasion of

224

224 554 588

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

224 C. Cariappah, the Subadar of the taluq, having shot a tiger.
554 Under a screen, on a wedding chair, his face towards the
588 carcass sat the hero of the day, clothed in Coorg warrior costume and covered with flower wreaths and gold ornaments. Behind him stood his armour-bearers, in front the sacred house lamp on a heap of rice, poured into a brass dish. First each
[431] member of his house, men, women and children, then all his
[574] friends, one by one, stepped up to the bridegroom; strewed a handful of rice from the brass dish over his head, gave him from a brass vessel a sip of milk to drink and in making obeisance, dropped a silver coin into his lap. This money is given with a view to defray the impending expenditure on a sumptuous dinner, given to the whole company. A Coorg dance round the tiger concludes the tamásh and the night wears away with singing and feasting.

*136 Government has now fixed a reward of Rupees five for
[654] the destruction of a tiger and Rupees three for that of a cheeta; but the unmutilated skin with the claws has to be delivered to the Sirkar. The height of the tiger varies from 3 to 4 and his length from 6 to 7 feet to which 3 feet may be added for the length of the tail. His weight is from 250 to 400 lbs.

[301] Sometimes one sees children with the ornament of 2 tiger's
[789] claws, joined together by silver or gold and suspended round
[825] the neck. This charm is supposed to keep off the evil eye. The age of a tiger is said to be ascertained by the number of lobes of his liver, one lobe being added every year!

The cheeta (*Can.* kiruba) or panther is more common than the tiger. It is a very destructive beast to smaller domestic animals. In his depredations he is a coward, chiefly attacking his prey by night and fleeing man, if unmolested.
[554] Upon the destruction of a cheeta by a Coorg, the same festivities, as on the tiger hunt, take place, but there is less honour to the sportsman. The skin of the cheeta is spotted with

1 [Errata: this should read "claws" See
1 Corrigenda sheet, Cat. 116, P. 473 -- Analyst]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

practice throughout the whole district by any person whether European or native. 231 778 656 648

J. S. FRASER, *Lt. Col.*
and Commissioner.

Mercara, 16th January 1835.

Whether the sanction of the Government of India was obtained to this prohibition is not apparent, but the Coorgs have always, up to this time, regarded it as binding on the British Government; and, under these circumstances, we must await the dissipation by education of existing prejudices on the subject on the part of the people.

Not venerated like the cow is the bison (*Can.* kádi; Bos cavifrons) which is killed by the Coorgs without hesitation; its flesh, however, is only eaten by the lowest classes. It lives in herds throughout the thickest forests and in the highest hills, especially in Marenád and Hormalnád. The male stands nearly 6 feet high at the shoulder, but disproportionately low behind, and reaches the length of 9 feet from nose to root of tail; the tail itself is almost 3 feet long. Its hump is rather small. When young, the colour of the bison is of a dark reddish hue, which changes with age into a greyish black, the belly, legs as far as the knee-joint, breast and face being, however, of a dirty, whitish tinge. The whole body, especially the dewlap, is covered with long hair and the eyes are of a light blue colour. The horns are short and thick at the base, but gradually become thinner, leaving the tips small and sharp; they are remarkable for the symmetry of their curvature, take a fine polish and the fortunate sportsman may be proud of the trophy. The hide, which is very thick, is used for covering shields. Naturally timid and of retiring habits, preferring shady woods to open glades, except in the cooler parts of the day, the bison, when alarmed or wounded, charges headlong with mad fury his imaginary or

[36* 262 554] [714 239]

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

or 6000 armed men, has during the long period of peace and prosperity under the British Government considerably increased and may now be estimated at about 30,000 souls.

2. PERSONAL APPEARANCE, OCCUPATION AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE COORGS.

The Coorgs, or Kodagas as they are properly called, are the principal tribe of the country and from time immemorial the lords of the soil. For the last two centuries they are known as a compact body of mountaineers who resemble more a Scotch clan than a Hindu caste. In the Hindu scale they are Sudras and not pork-eating "Bastard Kchetrias," as some mocking Brahmins would have it; but it ought to be the pride of the Coorgs to discard the notion of caste altogether, which in fact does not apply to them, and to stand upon their own merits as "Kodagas", the remarkable mountain clan of Coorg. Reserving an enquiry into their origin for the historical part, I would only remark, that the Coorgs of the present day are as distinct from the Malayálam and Canarese people on the western coast, as they are from the Mysoreans in the north and east, though their peculiarities are to some extent allied to the habits of the one as well as to those of the other race, and even their language is but a mixture of the Dravidian tongues.

Look at a group of Coorgs of the better class by the side of some Mysoreans or people from the western coast. The difference is striking. The Coorgs are tall, muscular, broad chested, strong limbed and swift-footed. Men of 6 feet and above are not uncommon. Their features are regular, often distinguished by an aquiline nose and finely chiselled lips set off by a well trimmed mustache which in the "gala-mishe" terminates in a broad volute as worn by their Rajahs and men

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

distinguished for bravery. Apparently anticipating the present military regulation, they shave their chin but sport mighty whiskers! The colour of the Coorgs is lighter than might be expected under this latitude. Their mode of life and pride of race impart to their whole bearing an air of manly independence and dignified self-assertion, well sustained by their peculiar and picturesque costume.

The principal Coorg dress is a long coat (kupasa) of white or blue cotton or dark coloured cloth and even velvet. It reaches below the knees, is open in front, has, if not white, short sleeves under which longer ones of a different colour extend to the waist, and is held together by a red or blue sash of cotton or silk which is several times wound round the waist and which holds the never failing Coorg knife, with ivory or silver handle and chains of the same metal. A red kerchief or the peculiarly fashioned turban, which is large and flat at the top and covers a portion of the back of the neck, forms the head-dress. The feet are bare or protected with light sandals. A necklace of the berry of Rudrákshi (Elæocarpus ganitrus), silver or gold bracelets on the wrists, and silver and gold earrings with pearls or precious stones complete their festive costume. Those who are in possession of the Coorg-medal or the lunulate ornament called Kokaládi[2] do not fail to suspend it round their neck, as may be seen on the front-illustration. Their every day dress is of course of a more simple nature. The Coorg warrior looks more imposing. His dress is of the same cut, but of coarser material and shorter. In addition to his handy waist-knife (Picha-katti), he wears on his back in a strong clasp of brass the curved, broad-bladed Coorg knife (Odu-katti) which is seen in the hand of the figure in our illustration. In a hand-to-hand fight it was a most formidable weapon and since the young Coorgs have no longer Mussulman or Nair antagonists to decapitate, they display at their feasts the strength of their

[1] [Errata: This should read "wrist" See Corrigenda, Cat. 116; P. 493 -- Analyst]
[2] [Errata: This should read "Kokadádi." -- Analyst]

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292 the same time gives vent to their vexation at the intractability of these rude mountaineers.

The head with its raven-hair is covered by a white muslin or coloured kerchief, one end of which encircles the forehead and the two corners are joined together at the back, allowing the rest of the cloth to fall gracefully over the shoulders. 301 The wealth of a Coorg family is displayed by the richness of [556] the ornaments of the women. Glass, silver or gold bracelets of a simple description span their wrists; their neck is decked with chains of coral, pearls or gold from which are suspended old Portuguese gold coins. Even the nose and the outer rein[1] of the ears are ornamented with pretty jewellery in gold, pearls and precious stones, and also silver rings are worn on the toes.

292 531 The white festive gowns of the men, as well as the kerchiefs of the women, are skilfully embroidered along the seams and in the corners with red marking cotton and the patterns of native design are often very elegant. The Coorg women esteem their own embroidery more than Berlin work, as the former unlike the latter shows the pattern equally well on both sides.

462 As for industry the Coorg women deserve high praise. They rise early and besides cooking and other domestic work, they bear a large share in the labours of the farm. The men plough the fields, transplant and reap the rice; the women carry manure, weed, fetch home and clean the paddy. The [357] men do no menial work, they leave that to their women and [562] to their servants, whilst they enjoy a dignified repose, dis- [554] cussing the affairs of the house and chewing betel, or stitching a piece of clothing in which art many are as expert as professional tailors, others, gun on shoulder, wander through the jungles in search of game, but the height of their ambition is to figure in the capacity of a Government Official in the administration of their country.

[1] [Errata; this should read "rim". See corrigenda, Cat. 116, p. 473--Analyst]